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Malaysian Women's Soccer Team Builds Bridges with America Through Sport



Players from America and Malaysia in a "team" photo.

Members of the Malaysian young women's soccer team enjoyed participating in a Malaysia-America Soccer Exchange held between April 16 – 25, 2010 in the U.S. The program was made possible by an International Sports Programming Initiative grant through the U.S. Department of State's SportsUnited office. The Malaysia delegation included 13 players, 1 coach, and 2 administrators and visited San Francisco, California and Portland, Oregon.



2-time World Champion and Olympic Gold Medalist, Brandi Chastain, provides instruction on footwork.



Players from America and Malaysia in a “team” photo.

The delegation enjoyed a unique balance of American soccer training and cultural activities to forge strong relationships with the American soccer community. In San Francisco, the delegation enjoyed a personal training session with 2-time FIFA Women’s World Champion and Olympic Gold Medalist, Brandi Chastain. They also watched FC Gold Pride’s season opener and met FIFA Women’s World Player of the Year, Marta.

In Portland, the Malaysian delegation toured the Nike campus, met with top women business leaders and trained on the Nike pitch. Their hosts for the Portland tour, Northeast United Soccer Club, took the Malaysian players to American schools and homes, and shared their training field for practice. After a discussion with American counterparts on the Malaysian team’s plans to build youth development academies, the team had a memorable send off celebration in which the athletes exchanged jerseys and listened to American and Malaysian songs.

Access Students Celebrate USMNT and World Cup Soccer with Sports United Alumni



Boys from the English Access Microscholarship Program at the U.S. Soccer in Malaysia program organized by the U.S. Embassy and ELS Language Centre.

In advance of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, Cultural Affairs Officer (CAO) Nicholas Papp organized a sports program for 80 English Access Microscholarship students from the [English Language Centre](#) (ELS) in suburban Kuala Lumpur on June 8. The students were treated to a multimedia presentation on sports and soccer culture in the US featuring short videos of American youth (boys and girls) enjoying soccer. The CAO also gave each student a packet of photos of the [US Men's National Team](#) (USMNT) all-star players. Seven alumni of the [Sports United Malaysian-American Soccer Exchange program](#) also attended the program and shared experiences of their exchange program to San Francisco and Portland. Following the briefing, the students moved outside to the soccer field where they enjoyed friendly matches and drills organized by Embassy staff as well as the Sports United alumni.



English Access Microscholarship girls enjoy a U.S. Soccer in Malaysia program with alumni of the recent Sports United Malaysian-American Soccer Exchange program.



English Access Microscholarship boys enjoy a friendly soccer match at the U.S. Soccer in Malaysia program in celebration of the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the U.S. Men's National Team.

The female Access students showed the most personal growth during the program. Originally not very interested in what they perceived to be a sport for boys, the girls' engagement with the Sports United young women alumni instilled a strong sense of confidence in the girls as they began to really enjoy U.S. Soccer in Malaysia. After 30 minutes, the girls participated in a competition with the Sports United stars. Following the program, the U.S. Embassy held a lucky draw giving away brand new Nike soccer balls to three lucky students.

A journalist and photographer from Malaysia's largest circulation newspaper, The Star, attended the program and interviewed the CAO, the English Access faculty and students as well as the Sports United alumni.



English Access Microscholarship students enjoy a friendly girls soccer match at the U.S. Soccer in Malaysia program in celebration of the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the U.S. Men's National Team.



One smile and friendly gesture at the close of the event expresses the feelings of all the students.